DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 420 349 JC 980 297

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TITLE Living the Myth: Merging Student and Teacher Needs in Responding Effectively and Efficiently to Student Papers.
PUB DATE 1997-10
NOTE 27p.; Paper presnted at the Annual Conference of the English Council of California Community and Two Year Colleges (ECCCTYC) (San Francisco, CA, October 16-18, 1997).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Community Colleges; *Feedback; Student Characteristics; Student Needs; *Teacher Response; Teacher Role; *Teacher Student Relationship; Two Year Colleges; Writing Difficulties; *Writing Evaluation; Writing Improvement; *Writing Instruction; Writing Teachers

ABSTRACT

This document begins with a presentation of research results concerning teachers' comments on student papers. It asserts that positive comments are usually more helpful than negative ones, teachers should play different roles when responding to papers (such as average reader, coach, or editor), comments should be written in the first person and entail a range of responses, comments should display respect for the writer, and papers should be read through once before comments are made. Cover sheets--identical forms measuring the same criteria--can be used to maintain consistency, and "boilerplating"--predrafted comments accessible by computer-- can ensure efficiency. The document provides categories of response: global, specific formal, and mechanical elements. An annotated bibliography is also offered, followed by sample boilerplate responses and how to implement them on computer. Sample cover letters are included. The document concludes with a discussion on how personality preferences affect responses to student writing. (YKH)

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ED 420 349

ECCTYC Statewide Conference
San Francisco, CA
October 17, 1997

Living the Myth: Merging Student and Teacher Needs in Responding Effectively and Efficiently to Student Papers

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Script

In 1993, Robert J. Connors and Andrea J. Lunsford published the results of a survey they conducted concerning kinds of and reasons for teachers' written comments on student papers. Of 3,000 papers they collected, 9% offered all positive comments. 23% of the papers had only negative comments. Connors and Lunsford provide an example of an end comment written on a paper about arriving at the scene of an accident during which a sixteen-year-old girl dies: "Learn to use subordination. You might have given us more on the drunken driver and your subsequent thoughts about him. You are still making comma splices! You must eliminate this error once and for all. Is it because you are unable to recognize an independent clause?" Imagine the effect on the writer's attitude toward the instructor, the class, and writing.

Interestingly, Lunsford and Connors found that 59% of all comments justified grades. The authors refer to these as *autopsies*. We can see why: these kinds of comments either kill the writing or assume it's dead.

Instead of behaving like undertakers, current theory suggests that we keep the writer and the writing alive:

- We all know that positive comments are usually more helpful than negative comments: students need to learn what they're doing right, not just what they're doing wrong, and even if a positive comment is non-transferable to the next assignment, it can still serve as powerful motivation to continue writing and to value revision. (Daiker, Peitzman)

- We know that teachers can respond effectively to students' papers by playing different roles depending upon where the students and their drafts are in the writing process. It's equally important that teachers make students' roles clear.
  - When a teacher adopts the role of *average reader*, students assume the role of writers in a community of writers.
  - When a teacher adopts the role of *coach* or *more experienced writer*, students assume the role of writers-in-training improving their writing skills and their understanding of the writing process.
  - When a teacher adopts the role of *editor*, students again assume the role of writers-in-training learning self-editing skills. (Sperling, Valentino)

- We know that comments written in the first person are usually more appropriate than comments written in the second or third person:
  - ***First person:*** *I'm not sure whether sentence four or sentence five is your thesis*

statement.
The teacher assumes the role of one reader in a community of writers to which the writer and the teacher both belong.

- ***Second person:*** *Your thesis statement isn't clear.*
  The teacher assumes the role of an evaluator whom the student must please.
- ***Third person:*** *The thesis statement isn't clear.*
  The teacher addresses the student as though the student's work is being compared to an ideal text which already exists and which the student has to emulate. (Mayo)

☛ We all know that effective comments entail a range of responses: suggestions that help writers realize their intentions for the piece, personal reactions that apprise writers of a representative reader's responses (and assure them that we're actually reading their pieces), and editing advice that addresses mechanical and stylistic issues. (Anson, Brannon and Knoblauch)

☛ We know that effective comments help the writer recognize that the current draft does not necessarily reflect the writer's or the paper's potential. This version of this draft is just that: this version of this draft. (Lees)

☛ We know that effective comments reveal the responder's respect for the writer: they include the writer's name, they provide text-specific response, and they avoid conditional praise (praise joined to constructive criticism with words like "but" or "however"). (Peitzman)

☛ Finally, we know that current response theory suggests we read a paper through once before we tender comment; in this way, we can avoid reactionary, contradictory, unnecessary, or hypercritical response. (Peitzman)

When I [Tracy] first started teaching, family and friends suggested that I made a good career choice because teachers have so much time off. At the time, I was mortified. I never had any time off, what with all the preparation for classes and the responding to papers required of teachers. I began to wonder what was wrong with me. After a few more years of repeated reminders about the leisure time I most definitely did not have, I began to nurse a righteous indignation. These well-meaning people had no idea how much time I spent on papers from four composition courses, how often my work week stretched way beyond forty hours. Now when people speak longingly of all the time teachers have off, I just laugh. I know I don't live that myth; I know how time-consuming teaching really is, how it can take every minute of every day—including evenings and weekends—to respond to student papers. I also know that as I progress through the stacks of papers I bring home, it becomes increasingly difficult to respond the way I know I need to.

Enter cover sheets, samples of which we have included in the handout. Not only can cover sheets keep us focused, but they can also help us maintain consistency. That is, by the time we reach the tenth paper in our stack, we're still focused on the same criteria we responded to on the first paper. And we are better able to maintain our positive tone regarding each student's paper. Ultimately, this focus and consistency saves us time.

Cover sheets benefit teachers in other, less obvious ways. They can keep us effective. The first sample cover sheet in the packet, for instance, insures that we provide positive feedback. There are other ramifications, too. The checklist offers an at-a-glance guide for assigning a paper grade. If 90% of our checks appear in the "Excellent" or "Good" column, chances are we are looking at an A or B paper. Finally, the checklist can help inform or pedagogy: if most of our students' thesis statements "Deserve Attention," then we know it's time to devote more class time to the subject.

Cover sheets benefit students as well. They can be designed to encourage self-evaluation and responsibility by asking students to identify their own strengths and weaknesses. If students retain their cover sheets throughout the term, they serve as indicators of students' progress.

We've used cover sheets for years now, and we find them invaluable. But honestly, they're not without fault. The longer we teach, the more illegible our handwriting becomes. Anymore, we feel like we spend as much time helping our students decipher our handwriting as we do helping them revise. Not only that, by the time we get to the twelfth paper, we've probably written the same comment or comments twelve times. It's not the twelfth writer's fault that we've suggested to eleven of her colleagues that they narrow their focus, but at that stage of the day, we're tempted to make her feel responsible for the sins of the class. This is why we've come up with boilerplating. Boilerplating involves predrafting comments we frequently make and programming them into a computer so that they're readily available through a macro: a very few keystrokes produces a whole comment. In other words, instead of having to type, "Can you help me, please, to see how this information helps to support your point or thesis? I think I need help understanding why your readers need to be aware of this information," We can type "Contrl-1," and the predrafted comment appears on the screen. We can then quickly edit the comment so that it includes text-specific references and the writer's name. Boilerplating saves us time, it ensures that our tone and depth remain consistent, and it provides our students with a text we're sure they can read.

We can use boilerplates on their own, or we can print the boilerplated responses on the reverse of a cover sheet. Directions for creating boilerplates on the IBM using macros in WordPerfect 5.2 for Windows appear in your packet. Although computer programs exist which perform boilerplating functions, they're expensive, and students must own the software to access our comments.

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Categories of Response

- **Global (or Rhetorical) Elements:**
  - audience
  - organization
  - overall progress, beyond commentary on paper
  - purpose
  - response to assignment
  - supporting evidence, examples, details

- **Specific Formal Elements:**
  - documentation
  - paper format
  - paragraph structure
  - quotation
  - sentence structure
  - source materials

- **Mechanical Elements:**
  - punctuation
  - spelling
  - syntax
  - usage (mechanics/grammar)

Abridged from:

Connors, Robert J. and Andrea A. Lunsford. "Teachers' Rhetorical Comments on Student Papers." *CCC* 40 (1993): 200-23.

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Annotated Bibliography

Anson, Chris M. "Response Styles and Ways of Knowing." *Writing and Response: Theory, Practice, and Research.* IL: NCTE, 1989. 332-366.

Anson reminds us that students are thinkers and learners rather than empty, eager vessels to be filled with our absolute truths. So, building upon William Perry's examination of the ways in which college students view their world and acquire knowledge, Anson posits three approaches to learning:

- *dualistic*: knowledge is absolute and polar. To learn, one need only collect truths from Authority (teachers, books). Writing, therefore, is formulaic, the sum of right answers presented with mechanical and grammatical precision.
- *relativistic*: knowledge is relative. In the early stages of relativism, students believe Authority withholds knowledge so that students may discover it on their own, and success is contingent upon how well students decipher the Authority's expectation. In the later stages of relativism, students recognize that knowledge depends upon context and therefore any position is equally feasible and defensible. They avoid analysis and opinion, granting equal validity to all Authority. These writers bristle at evaluation of anything other than grammatical or mechanical accuracy (I often hear, "How can you grade me on my **ideas**?!?").
- *committed relativism*: there are no absolutes, no one right answer. Students recognize multiple points of view and weigh these carefully before arriving at an opinion. Most importantly, however, they recognize that further information may modify or contradict that opinion. These writers recognize the fluid state of knowledge and welcome its tentativeness during the early stages of writing, knowing that, with enough reflection, they will arrive at a satisfying and legitimate position.

Based upon this model, he then posits three commenting categories:

- ⊗ *dualistic comments*: those focused almost exclusively on surface features.
- ⊗ *relativistic comments*: those focused almost entirely on the information in the text without any discussion of how well the text acts a medium for that information.
- ◉ *reflective comments*: those that challenge writers to reexamine and rethink their texts, that incorporate a range of responses, including suggestions, personal reactions, and consequences of surface features.

Brannon, Lil, and C.H. Knoblauch. "On Students' Rights to Their Own Texts: A Model of Teacher Response." *College Composition and Communication* 33 (1982): 157-66.

Knoblauch, C.H., and Lil Brannon. "Responding to Texts: Facilitating Revision in the Writing Workshop." *Rhetorical Traditions and the Teaching of Writing.* NJ: Boynton, 1984. 118-50.

Brannon and Knoblauch propose the notion of the *Ideal Text*: instructors assume full knowledge of writer's intent and insist that they are the best judge of how well the writer achieves it. ("Students' Rights" 159) The results?

- *Conservative paternalism* leads to an underestimation of the writer's competence: instructors employ Ideal Text as a yardstick to measure failure.
- *Liberal paternalism* leads to an exaggeration of the writer's competence: instructors focus upon some quality in the text and use its presence to excuse some lapse in achieving the Ideal Text.

Facilitative response blends responding, negotiating, and evaluating.

- *responding*: react to content and to what the writer has to say.
- *negotiating:* assume that the writer knows best what he/she intends for the piece and that we (as readers) know best how we are affected by the way in which the author tenders that intention.
- *evaluating*: indicate how well we feel the written product reflects the writer's intentions for it.

But how do we discover a writer's intent? Brannon and Knoblauch suggest the following:

- Writers and readers should exchange information about intent and effect by answering separately a few general questions and then comparing answers: "What did the writer intend to do?" "What has the writing actually said?" and "How has the writing done what it is supposed to do?" ("Students' Rights" 162).
- Either in preparation for or in lieu of a Writing Conference, writers should compose a double entry draft (my term, not theirs): writers should format their drafts so that the piece itself occupies only the left half of the page, leaving room for the writers to indicate what they are trying to say and how they want their reader to react to it in the right hand column ("Students' Rights" 163-64).
- Responders should make full use of the question, and the attitude inherent in questioning, when writing comments on student papers. Questions help us to avoid directive comments, to instead say or imply, "Here's what your choices have caused me to think you're saying--if my response differs from your intent, how can you help me to see what you mean?" ("Responding" 129).

Elbow, Peter, and Pat Belanoff. *Sharing and Responding*. NY: McGraw-Hill, 1989. 63-8.

Although Elbow and Belanoff have fashioned models directed at peer response group sessions, the stances and strategies they propose also prove fruitful for the teacher/responder.

I. ***No Responding: Sharing***
   A. How: Simply read your draft out loud.
   B. When: when time is short, or when you're feeling sensitive about your writing. This technique is also useful (strangely) when you feel finished with your piece, when you want to celebrate and share what you've accomplished.

II. ***Descriptive Responding***
   A. *Sayback*
      1. How: Ask your readers to repeat back--in their own words and phrased in the form of a question--what they hear you saying in your paper.
      2. When: at an early stage in your writing, when you're not sure how well you've written what you're trying to say.
   B. *Pointing*
      1. How: Ask your readers to point to words or phrases that stuck in their minds, or areas of your work they liked best. Remember, you don't want them to explain why at this point.
      2. When: when you need support or your confidence boosted. This is particularly useful in finding out what parts of your writing stick with your reader or are effective.
   C. *Summarizing*
      1. How: Ask your readers to summarize what they feel is your main point or idea. Ask them also to identify secondary or subsidiary points/ideas.
      2. When: again, when you need to know what portions of your writing stick with your reader, what's getting through.

D. *What's Almost Said or Implied*
   1. How: Ask your readers to identify what they'd like to hear more about, what ideas or events or points hover around the edge of your piece.
   2. When: when you feel your piece isn't full or interesting enough, when you need new ideas or thoughts about how to expand upon what you've written.

E. *Center of Gravity*
   1. How: Ask your readers to identify what, for them, serves as your focal point, the source of energy in the piece. Remember, the center of gravity isn't always the main point, but can be an image or a phrase that seems to reverberate throughout your work.
   2. When: again, when you feel your piece isn't ample or interesting enough, or when you need fresh insights.

F. *Structure; Voice, Point of View, Attitude toward the Reader: Level of Abstraction or Concreteness; Language, Diction, Syntax*
   1. How: Ask you readers to describe for you any or all of these features of your piece.
   2. When: at any stage. This is particularly useful when you need a fresh or different perspective on your piece.

E. *Metaphorical Descriptions*
   1. How: Ask you readers to describe your piece in terms of colors, animals, weather, or clothing; to describe the "shape" of your piece (pear-shaped, rectangular, etc.); to think about what might have been on your mind when you wrote the piece.
   2. When: at any stage. Again, this method proves helpful when you need a fresh or different perspective, when you feel stale and used up.

III. ***Analytical Responding***

A. *Skeleton Feedback*
   1. How: Ask your readers to tell you about your reasons and support in the work, about the assumptions they feel you make, and about your audience they feel you address.
   2. When: when you need help organizing and adding to your material, to help you analyze the strengths and weaknesses in your piece.

B. *Believing and Doubting*
   1. How: Ask you readers to believe (or pretend to believe) everything you have written and, in doing this, to provide more ideas and perspectives that would help your case. Then ask them to doubt everything you've written, to make arguments against what you've asserted.
   2. When: at any stage, particularly when you need help supporting an assertion or argument. This technique works both in Response Groups or when you're working on a draft on your own.

C. *Descriptive Outline*
   1. How: Ask your readers to give you *says* and *does* sentences: one for your whole piece and one for each paragraph/section of your work. *Says* sentences summarize the author's words. *Does* sentences identify how something functions in the strategy of the whole piece, or what it accomplishes in the piece.
   2. When: at later stages of writing, later drafts. This technique provides tremendous perspective, but is also very time consuming. You can practice this method on your own work quite effectively.

IV. ***Reader-Based Responding: Movies of the Reader's Mind***

A. How: Ask your readers to tell you frankly what goes on in their heads when they read/hear your piece, either on the *says* level or on the *does* level.

B. When: at any stage. Warning: this method can lead to blunt criticism, so you may feel best using it when you're feeling strong about your draft. Also, this method doesn't necessarily aid a specific draft or paper but is quite useful in long-range learning (audience awareness).

V. ***Criterion-Based or Judgment-Based Responding***

A. How: Ask your readers to provide information based on the following:

1. *Traditional criteria for characterizing creative writing:* description, vividness of details; character(s); plot; language; meaning
2. *Traditional criteria for characterizing expository writing:* focus on task, content, clarity, organization, sense of the author, mechanics

B. When: when you need to know how your writing will measure up to specific criteria, or when you need a quick overview of strengths or weaknesses.

Lees, Elaine O. "Evaluating Student Writing." ***College Composition and Communication*** **30 (1979): 370-74.**

Lees divides commenting into seven modes: correcting, emoting, describing, suggesting, questioning, reminding, and assigning. For Lees, effective comments foster a tension between what the writer has produced and what he/she has yet to produce, between what the writer has written and who the writer is. Any particular work is not the final determination of the writer's ability to compose.

1. *correcting*: those comments that prize editorial and conventional neatness above all others.
2. *emoting*: those comments that recount the reader's gut level reaction to the piece.
3. *describing*: those comments that focus upon what the piece does or how it behaves.
4. *suggesting*: those comments that begin with, "Why don't you . . ." or "How about . . ."
5. *questioning*: those comments that involve the writer in ascertaining how well intention matches effect.
6. *reminding*: those comments that incorporate student vernacular.
7. *assigning*: a mode of responding that creates another assignment based upon the student's response to the current one.

Peitzman, Faye. "From Theory to Practice: Responding to Student Writing." ***National Writing Project Newsletter*** **7 (April, 1985): 4-9.**

Peitzman provides a tangible framework from which to develop our own response styles:

- Read the entire paper before making comments. In this way we can avoid comments that make contradictory suggestions (i.e. to rephrase a sentence in the paragraph that we later suggest is superfluous).
- Address the writer by name.
- First specifically state a major strength of the paper and then pin-point the nature of a major weakness, and do not join these statements with a "but" or "however." The praise should be unconditional, and not contingent upon the rectification of error. This may result in some choppiness. That's okay; it is a small price to pay.
- Questions and suggestions should be text-specific. Note particularly effective paragraphs and sentences (we learn just as much from comments that point to strengths). This list should be concise and should follow logically from introductory remarks.
- Adopt a supportive and positive tone.
- Whenever appropriate, phrase comments tentatively: comments that begin with "Perhaps . . ." or "What do you think about . . ." work quite well, as do questions. We want to help students recognize that there is more than one way to solve a "problem."
- If appropriate, be directive but remember that the teacher/reader is not both the problem solver *and* the problem finder.
- Always close with encouraging and supportive remarks.

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Sample Boilerplate Responses

- I am impressed by your effectiveness as a writer and your command of mechanics.
- Some readers may have difficulty understanding your specialized vocabulary.
- Who is your intended audience for this paper?
- I had difficulty following your organization. How could you restructure your paper for readers like me?
- Where can you replace strong verbs for "be" verbs and specific nouns for pronouns?
- I appreciate your attention to sentence rhythm and variety. Thank you.
- I was moved by your paper, *[Name]*. You were able to show us these events through the strength of description rather than being overly sentimental or maudlin. Bravo! You let the reader experience this, too, rather than just trying to ***tell*** him or her.
- I'm not sure what idea controls this part of the paper—could you try jotting it down in the margin and then embedding it in the paragraph?
- The word "but" appears quite often at the beginning of your sentences. It's actually only a connecting word rather than a transition. Could you brainstorm some stronger transition words that could work here (i.e., "on the other hand," "conversely," etc.)?
- I can really see what *[specific textual reference]* looks like!
- I'm concerned about your paragraph order. Please be sure to order your paragraph topics so that they follow your plan of development.
- I'm delighted by your thesis, *[Name]*. It's clear, interesting, and gracefully stated. I can identify your stance, and I'm eager to read on. Well done!
- I'm concerned about your thesis, *[Name]*. If I've identified it correctly (*[third sentence in the first paragraph]*, yes?), it looks more like a fact than a thesis to me. Because we know that a fact cannot act as a thesis—facts, by definition, are proven assertions that need no further support—please decide what you want to say ***about*** your topic.
- *[Name]*, there are times when you employ exquisitely expressive, active verbs (*[specific textual reference]*, for instance). I appreciate in these instances how well I can see both the action and how you feel about that action. Bravo! Are there other areas in your text that would benefit from more active, vivid verbs?

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To Create a Boilerplate on the IBM Using Macros in WordPerfect 5.2 for Windows

1. Compile a list of single-digit or single-letter codes and make a hard copy of your list for later reference. For instance:
   Thesis:
   1. Excellent Thesis Statement
   2. Good / Above Average Thesis Statement
   3. Adequate / Average Thesis Statement
   4. Inadequate / Below Average Thesis Statement
   5. Missing / Unidentifiable / Inappropriate Thesis Statement

   Organization:
   6. Excellent Organization
   7. Good / Above Average Organization
   8. Adequate / Average Organization
   9. Inadequate / Below Average Organization
   10. Missing / Unidentifiable / Inappropriate Organization

   et cetera . . .
2. Compose a comment/response for each of your codes.
3. Open a WordPerfect document.
4. From the **MACRO** menu (see status bar on top of the screen), select **RECORD**.
5. In the **Macro Record Dialogue Box**:
   a. In the **Filename** box, depress the **CONTROL** key while simultaneously depressing your first code.
   b. In the **Descriptive Name** box, type in that code's designation (Excellent Thesis).
   c. The dialogue box also allows for an **Abstract**. You may elect to type a brief description or your full comment here. This is optional. (I never complete the abstract because I maintain a hard copy and the macro does not print the abstract.)
   d. Click on the **Record** box.
6. ***Carefully*** type the text of your comment/response. Remember that the macro will faithfully reproduce every keystroke, including backspaces and errors. If you make a mistake, select **STOP** from the **MACRO** menu and begin again from step four.
7. When you've finished typing your comment/response, select **STOP** from the **MACRO** menu. You have just composed your first boilerplate macro.
8. Repeat steps four through seven for each of your comments/responses.
9. To activate your boilerplate macro, in an open file simultaneously depress the **CONTROL** key and the appropriate code (for instance, **Ctrl7**). Insert the writer's name and/or text-specific references as necessary.
10. It might be prudent to print a hard copy of your complete comment/response repertoire for easy reference and/or for macro reconstruction should, heaven forbid, your computer crash or eat your files. (I'm so anal that I maintain two back ups and two hard copies.)

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Name: _____ Paper #2

Things I believe you do well (and perhaps need to do more of):

_____

_____

_____

Things I believe require attention (here and in future papers):

_____

_____

_____

Tracy's suggestions for revision:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Checklist: _____ colon _____ semicolon _____ comma _____ dash

	Excellent	Good	Deserves attention	Deserves *much* more attention
Paper format/requirements				
Title				
Summary				
Thesis				
Support for thesis				
Gracefully integrated quotes				
General punctuation				
Punctuation of dialogue				
Verb tense				
Author's name				
Lean prose				
Be/have/give/say/use				
Sentence texture/variety				

Initial Grade: _____ **PAPER GRADE:** _____

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Cover Sheet for Paper #2: Personal Narrative

Tracy D. Duckart
Leslie R. Leach
Nancy A. Knowles

Author's Name: _____

Paper Title: _____

What I do well in this paper: _____

I worked really hard on: _____

If I had one more day, I'd work on: _____

Tracy will worry about: _____

I learned when I wrote this paper: _____

I still need to learn: _____

Grade I anticipate and why: _____

Three questions:

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

colon semicolon comma dash

Checklist		Excellent	Good	Deserves Attention	Deserves MUCH More Attention
Setting	*Writer*				
	Tracy				
Description (showing vs. telling)	*Writer*				
	Tracy				
Characters	*Writer*				
	Tracy				
Dialogue	*Writer*				
	Tracy				
Pacing and Build	*Writer*				
	Tracy				
Conflict	*Writer*				
	Tracy				
Resolution / Conclusion	*Writer*				
	Tracy				
Lesson: Reason for Telling	*Writer*				
	Tracy				
Title	*Writer*				
	Tracy				
Overuse: be, have, give, use, say	*Writer*				
	Tracy				
Lean Prose (no wordiness)	*Writer*				
	Tracy				
Sentence Variety / Texture	*Writer*				
	Tracy				
General Punctuation	*Writer*				
	Tracy				
Punctuation of Dialogue	*Writer*				
	Tracy				
Paper Format Requirements	*Writer*				
	Tracy				
Prewriting	*Writer*				
	Tracy				*missing*

Initial Grade: _____ **Paper Grade:** _____

Things I believe you do well (and perhaps need to do more of):

Things I believe require attention (here and in future papers):

Tracy's suggestions for revision:

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October 17, 1997

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Leslie R. Leach
Tracy D. Duckart
Nancy A. Knowles

Title: _____

Author: _____

Intended Audience: _____

Purpose of Piece: _____

I was working on: _____

Type of Response: *Average Reader* *Coach* *Editor*

Checklist (and symbol	Author	Peer	Teacher
Capitals			
Punctuation			
Paragraphs			
Spelling			
Quotations			
Run-Ons			
Sentence Structure			
etc.			

Strengths:

Areas to Work On:

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Title: _____

Author: _____

Intended Audience: _____

Purpose of Piece: _____

Respondent Type: *Average Reader* *Coach* *Editor*

	Author	Peer Editor	Teacher	Comments
Capitals				
Paragraphs				
Spelling (circled words not known)				
Line Breaks for Poetry				
Quotations				
Run-Ons				
etc.				

Major Strengths:

We'll Work On:

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Title: _____

Author: _____

Intended Audience: _____

Purpose of Piece: _____

	Met	Partial	Marginal	Not Met
Audience				
Beginning				
Middle				
End				
Tension				
Supporting Evidence / Examples / Details				
Paragraph Structure				
Quotation				
Sentence Structure				
Documentation / Source Materials				
Punctuation				
Spelling				
Mechanics / Grammar				
Word Choice				
Genre Specific				

Other Comments:

Please note: this form may be used to chart responses to different drafts of the same piece by using a coding system that indicates first, second, third, etc. readings.

Status-of-the-Class Option: after papers are returned, ask, "What will you work on now?"

Tendered by RWP 1996 Summer Institute Fellows

"Living the Myth: Merging Student and Teacher Needs in Responding Effectively and Efficiently to Student Papers"

Personality Portion

Nancy Knowles

My purpose in integrating a discussion of personality into our exploration of time-saving response tools is that oftentimes these tools can feel impersonal and not individualized enough. Attending to personality type in the construction and use of these forms provides a means of making them more personal and more capable of addressing the needs of individual students.

Has anyone heard of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator? The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator is a measurement tool which resembles a test in that it is comprised of roughly 300 questions. However, it does not really function as a test because there are no right or wrong answers. Instead, answers to the questions are used to determine a participant's personality type according to a particular typology.

This typology originates in Isabel Myers's revision of C.G. Jung's *Psychological Types*. In this typology, there are four bi-polar dimensions (see the Personality Preference Self-selection handout):

*ways of focusing one's energy (introverting/extroverting)

*ways of perceiving (sensing/intuiting)

*ways of making decisions (thinking/feeling)

*ways of approaching tasks (judging/perceiving)

Determining personality type involves selecting which half of

each pair most accurately describes an individual's character.

Before we try self-selecting our personality types, I need to make several qualifications. First, personality type is not a once-and-for-all label; your type can change based on many factors including external circumstances. For example, I usually prefer introverting, but in the role of teacher, my preference is extroverting. Second, in making this selection, you are not eliminating skills in the other areas; instead you are merely indicating preference, which Jensen and DiTiberio aptly compare with handedness. Because we prefer our right or our left hand does not mean that we never use the other hand. This is why, following Desiree Angeli's model, I've used verbs ending in "-ing" ("thinking") rather than nouns ending in "-er" ("thinker")--so that these terms are more like actions which can be chosen as opposed to personal labels which cannot be changed.

To self-select your personality type, read the description of each bi-polar pair and circle one of the two, either introverting or extroverting, either sensing or intuiting, and so on. When finished, please note that each selection has one large, bold letter in it. These letters are the abbreviations common to the discussion of personality type. So, for example, if I have selected introverting, intuiting, feeling and judging, the abbreviation which represents my personality type is INFJ.

Used carefully, with every effort to avoid narrow stereotyping, personality can give a responder two particular advantages in relation to drafting cover sheets and boilerplates:

1) knowing my response preferences can help me use the

strengths of my personality and compensate for my weaknesses;

2) and knowing my students' preferences, or at least imagining possible preferences besides my own, can help me accommodate their response needs.

In order to discuss how knowing my personality preferences affects my response to student writing, I've limited our original 8-type model to David Kiersey's 4-type model for convenience (see Responding by Temperament handout). For example, examine the characteristics of a teacher preferring NF. Notice the emphasis in this personality type on student-centered response. Now, take a look at the sample "Cover Sheet for Paper #2" drafted by Tracy Duckart who prefers NF. This cover sheet, in the top section and the checklist, asks for the student to provide feedback before the teacher does. Such a student-centered focus reveals the NF preference of its creator.

Although this cover sheet is very thorough, Tracy could improve it by imagining the response needs of her students based on preferences which differ from her own (see Student Response Needs by Temperament handout). For example, examine the description of NT on the Student Response Needs chart. Notice that this student needs to know the responder is competent. While a thorough form like Tracy's may be enough to demonstrate this, Tracy could still improve her credibility perhaps by adding a column in the checklist to include page numbers where particular strengths or weaknesses occur. This addition might help to demonstrate that her evaluation is a competent reflection of that particular paper.

Another example might involve students who prefer either SJ or SP. These types of students avoid revision that seems unnecessary or routine. These students need to know the purpose for any revisions Tracy suggests. To help meet this need, I could add "purpose" to the "Suggestions for revision" section of Tracy's form so that she's reminded when completing the form that the purpose for revision should be clearly stated.

It is possible to individualize response even further by acquiring individual personality type information from students, but, besides being time-consuming, this procedure has other significant drawbacks. Namely, individual people never exactly match general types. Moreover, students aware of such typing will feel pigeon-holed, limited, and therefore resistant. This depth of knowledge, therefore, is not necessary and may even hinder response success. Instead, I find it helpful simply to remind myself that there are other needs besides those which, based on my personality type, I might expect. A familiarity with those needs can assist me in recognizing and overcoming potential problems in response.

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Personality Preferences Self-Selection

Introverting	**E**xtroverting
• focused inward • likes to listen	• focused outward • likes to talk
Sensing	I**N**tuiting
• specific details • realistic plans • what is probable	• abstract concepts • idealistic endeavors • what is possible
Thinking	**F**eeling
• fairness • everyone is equal	• humaneness • every case is different
Judging	**P**erceiving
• to-do lists • plan for tomorrow	• spontaneous • live for today

partially based on Tieger

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Responding by Temperament

NF	SJ
• Values concept above detail • Values audience, values, feelings rather than logic, analysis • Values creativity, uniqueness, nonconformity • Avoids attacking writer • Response is student-centered, individualized • Recognizes talent, self-actualization • May avoid mentioning errors to avoid offense • Can be quite critical • Praises freely • Looks for significance • Can be vulnerable to students	• Values detail above concept • Values usefulness to society • Values organization, timeliness and following the assignment • Responses are well-planned, sequential, clearly articulated, firm & fair, practical • Impatient with non-conformity • Tends to teacher-centeredness • Thorough criticism so students know, but reluctant to indicate correctness • Neither vulnerable nor distant
NT	**SP**
• Values concept above detail • Demands logic, purpose, organization • Can be overly critical (has high standards) • May have excellent example against which all are measured • Enjoys complexity • Wants to improve things • Concerned with student metacognition • Values development of intelligence • Can be impersonal • Encourages curiosity in a rational project • Impatient with off-topic, slow learning • Tends to subject-centeredness • Separates student from text	• Values detail above concept • Values freedom, risk-taking, spontaneity • Can be unpredictable, impulsive in response • Not interested in completion or correction (routine) • Tends to teacher-centeredness • May have unique ability to help students solve immediate problems but ignore long-term learning • Student feedback about response alters response

from Angeli, Gladis and Kiersey

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Student Response Needs by Temperament

NF	**SJ**
Needs to be valued for uniqueness, integrity, authenticity Interested in self-actualization Needs encouragement Has difficulty with negative feedback Needs help with faulty logic and suspect date after being complimented on creativity Needs individualized response	Needs to be valued for following instructions on time Interested in text usefulness Needs clear, practical, fair approach May avoid revision that seems unnecessary or risky Needs to be valued for organization, clear wording, fairness of idea
NT	**SP**
Needs response that questions logic, that demonstrates an understanding of concept and effectively evaluates strengths and weaknesses Can be blind to own weaknesses Needs to know responder is competent Needs help with personal tone, faulty data Appreciates argument Can separate self from text Responder can appeal to student's high standards	Needs to be valued for risk-taking, sense of play May avoid revision or drafting that seems routine Needs hands-on learning Needs deadlines Needs help with correctness

from Angeli, Gladis and Kiersey

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Annotated Bibliography

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We developed a classroom activity asking students to explore the relationship between personality and writing and, using surveys, found that students benefitted from discussing the effect of personality on writing because they could see that a single, successful writing process did not exist, but neither were they alone as writers; other writers shared their strengths and weaknesses and had ideas for helping them improve.

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